

SecondFirst Church

Second Congregational UCC/First Presbyterian Church PC(USA)
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Non Profit
Organization US
Postage PAID
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Rockford, Illinois

APRIL 2024

THE TOWER

SECOND CONGREGATIONAL UCC/FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PC(USA)

Energizing downtown Rockford and beyond with God's Grace



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Christ Has Risen! He has Risen Indeed!

The tomb is empty. The stone is rolled away. There is no darkness now, only light. Through the Resurrection God continues to renew us and restore us. Alleluia and Amen.



Let us remember Easter is not just one day. Easter is a season that lasts 50 days until Pentecost. Easter is also a frame of mind and a way to live. Easter brings us the promise of a Hope that never dies and a love that never fails. April brings the promise of Spring, flowers, warm breezes and soft rain. April also brings special events to our church.

Our Tuesday Bible study begins again on April 9, from Noon until 1pm. We will be using a 6-week study on the Lord's Prayer. If you are interesting in joining us on Zoom send me an email and I will send you the weekly readings. No worries. The readings are short and easy.

Sunday April 28 will be a busy day. Immediately after worship we will have our annual Business Meeting and Foundation Meeting. Ring in Spring our Bell concert begins at 3pm in the Sanctuary.

See you in Church!



SecondFirst Merchandise

Plan for your summertime activities wardrobe now.

Order your shirts, hats and water bottles now so you have them for church events, fellowship and volunteering and we now have many options for you to choose from. You can get the church logo on the upper right chest, the church logo full front OR you can choose the church logo on the upper right chest and a custom Word Cloud on the back

(Make sure to choose a shirt with "Word Cloud" in the description).

You can pick them up from "Embroid This" on North Second or choose to have them picked up at Church. If you have any questions, please reach out to Jennifer Archer.

https://stores.inksoft.com/second_first



Reflections From the Moderator

Hello Church,

This is my last official missive, and it's certainly bittersweet. I know I won't be able to express all my feelings at the Annual Meeting, so I thought this might be an appropriate place. This past year has been a great learning experience – I've learned a lot about the church and a little about myself. I was certainly afraid at the start that a "peek behind the curtain" might be disheartening or perhaps even frightening. Fortunately, neither are true. It's impossible to say how much I appreciate each encouraging word that was offered often and generously. It was enough to fill my cup and keep me going. If possible, I love this church even more than when I started.



It was my pleasure visiting all the Teams, seeing all the great work that is being done, and getting to know better the members on those teams. We are definitely facing challenges, but I have all the faith and hope that we are poised to face them with grace and love. I'm looking forward to stepping back a bit, but I'm not going anywhere. See you in church!

Peace and much love,
Darlene Riddle



Pastor Search Committee Update

Your Search Committee has been busy! As reported earlier, we have submitted our church profile to the Blackhawk Presbytery. That resulted in 25 computer-generated matched profiles. Now, each profile needs to be reviewed to see if our assessment agrees with their algorithm for a match. After each committee member has a chance to review the profiles, we will compare our thoughts and compile a list of our favorite candidates. When that's complete, we will report our top candidates to the Presbytery, they contact the candidate to see if they in turn are interested in us, and then we can contact them directly after that. We receive the original profiles with assigned numbers only - no names are provided. As you might imagine, this process takes some time. In the meantime, we have a candidate from the UCC we will be talking to in the very near future.

Our committee has undergone some changes too. We are grateful for the thoughtful input Steve Muntz provided, and he has been missed since he resigned from the committee. Darlene Riddle, as her ex officio position ends, will take his place. Marge Maynard, our new moderator come May, will be the new ex officio member. Thank you all for your patience as we take the necessary steps to find the best Senior Pastor we can for our congregation.

Jay Baker, Co-Chair
Greg Makulec, Co-Chair
Sarah Reinold, Co-Secretary
Darlene Riddle, Co-Secretary

Phil Davidson
Mary Spindler
Madeline Archer
Marge Maynard



Sarah Hallberg Peanut Bells

It takes a village to get new Peanut music ready to play. Thanks again Valerie Blair, Jennifer Archer, and Nicholas Archer we've got three new songs ready.



Deacons/Fellowship Update

Hello Church Family!!

I hope you are enjoying these days full of sunshine!!

As we are entering into April, we have enjoyed our Lenten Season with palms, lemon bars and our Risen Christ! Your Deacons team hope to have some new adventures planned soon. Until then, stop to enjoy the spring flowers, return of the robins and an abundance of nature! Andrea E Akerman

Ministry/Missions Updates

Hello, April!!

It's time to start planning gardens! Let's help our friends in Haiti with funds for garden tools and seeds again this spring! Past donations have helped many become more self-sufficient with their food supply in Saut-d'Eau. Let's help more! Write 'Haiti' on your check or donate through our website, www.secondfirst.org, follow Donate link. Thanks for your support!

Want to help with food security closer to home?? Every month we deliver donations of non-perishable foods to the Rock River Valley Food Pantry. Let's see if we can fill our crate in the back of the sanctuary in April! Donations by checks are also welcome, note Pantry on the Memo line. Members of our community thank you.

By Karen Hill
Mission Ministry Chair



KFact Taco and Tutoring Thursdays

Hello everyone!

I just wanted to share a few pictures from our taco and tutoring club on Thursday nights. The girls absolutely love the space and said "they feel so safe and to tell you all thank you at Second First Church". They keep Ms. Tavi busy every Thursday night with preparing dinner and tutoring but they are all so worth it!

Have a great weekend and happy Easter!

Shamika and KFACT Team



Easter Season Special Offerings

Presbyterian Pentecost special offering

The Pentecost Offering funds a church-wide effort to help our youth begin life with a solid foundation of faith formed in the first third of life – from childhood through young adulthood. Forty percent of our gifts remain with us.

UCC OCWM special offering

Our Church World Wide Mission - OCWM - offering funds particular UCC missions around the globe as well as in local congregations. You are urged to give to either or both offerings throughout May and June. Dave Jones

A Note From Our Children and Family Coordinator

By Aubrey Barnett

We have so many fun events for the children that I can hardly keep track of.

Youth Service Sunday—Join us April 7th for a worship service led by the youth. There will be readings, a puppet show, a mini sermon given by our graduating senior Madeline Archer, and lots of joy. Celebrate the glory of Jesus’s resurrection and the hard work of the children and teens.



Letters to Hayden-As an activity in Sunday School, we wrote letters of encouragement and support to Hayden Hallberg. The students partnered with the teens to help them write their letters, and Ms. Sarah shipped them off in a care package. We pray for his safe keeping and a healthy return home to his church family when his leave comes. We are so lucky to have such a brave, intelligent young man protecting our country.



Building with a Firm Foundation- Another activity we did in Sunday School this month was building towers with donated supplies. We discussed Jesus being a firm foundation for our lives and how he can help us reach new heights. Then we used tape and cards to build the tallest towers we could!



April 2024

Monday, April 1

Office Closed

Tuesday, April 2

7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop
12:00 PM – Bible Study
6:00 PM – DVT

Wednesday, April 3

10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
6:00 PM – Martins

Thursday, April 4

9:30 AM – Carillons
6:00 PM – Bellcantos
7:00 PM – Choir

Friday, April 5

No Scheduled Activities
Office Closed

Saturday, April 6

No Scheduled Activities

Sunday, April 7 Youth Service

Communion
8:30 AM – Adult Ed
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store

Monday, April 8

11:30 AM – Serious Soup
5:00 PM – Deacons/Fellowship

Tuesday, April 9

7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop
12:00 PM – Bible Study
4:30 PM – Adult Ed - Hybrid

Wednesday, April 10

10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
6:00 PM – Martins

Thursday, April 11

9:30 AM – Carillons
6:00 PM – Bellcantos
7:00 PM – Choir

Friday, April 12

No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, April 13

9:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

Sunday, April 14 Peanuts

Choir
8:30 AM – Adult Ed
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store

Monday, April 15

11:30 AM – Serious Soup

Tuesday, April 16

7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop
12:00 PM – Bible Study
5:30 PM – Mission Team Hybrid

Wednesday, April 17

10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
6:00 PM – Trustees
6:00 PM – Martins

Thursday, April 18

9:30 AM – Carillons
6:00 PM – Bellcantos
7:00 PM – Choir

Friday, April 19

No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, April 20

10:00 AM – Jubilee Soup Kitchen

Sunday, April 21

Choir
8:30 AM – Adult Ed
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store

Monday, April 22

11:30 AM – Serious Soup

Tuesday, April 23

7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Store
12:00 PM – Bible Study

Wednesday, April 24

10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
6:00 PM – Martins

Thursday, April 25

9:30 AM – Carillons
5:30 PM – Governing Council Hybrid
6:00 PM – Bells
7:00 PM – Choir

Friday, April 26

No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, April 27

9:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

Sunday, April 28 Bells Sunday

Choir
8:30 AM – Adult Ed
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store
11:15 AM – Annual Program Meeting
Foundation Report
3:00 PM – Ring In Spring

Monday, April 29

11:30 AM – Serious Soup

Tuesday, April 30

7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop



Fishing Trip- Mark your calendars early. **Sunday, June 23rd**, is the tentative date for the summer youth and adult intergenerational fishing trip. Keep an eye out for more details as the spring unfolds.



Bowling - Sunday after church on April 14th from 12:00-2:00 pm, we invite anyone in the congregation who wishes to come bowling!

Please let Aubrey know if you want to reserve a spot. The cost for unlimited bowling with shoes is \$13. All are welcome, and you are encouraged to invite your friends.

RSVP to Aubrey via phone at 815-519-3817